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ABSTRACT

This position paper clarifies the goals of the Getty Center for Education in the Arts and its views on discipline-based art education (DBAE). The paper addresses and refutes misconceptions inherent in the following perceptions: (1) The Getty Center invented DBAE; (2) DBAE is a Specific Curriculum; (3) DBAE requires equal time and attention for each of the four disciplines and seeks to replace making art with talking about it; (4) DBAE does not encourage the development of creativity; (5) DBAE is mechanistic and takes the fun out of art; (6) The Getty Center does not support art specialists and DBAE does not involve artists; (7) DBAE is limited to fine art from Western Cultures; (8) The Getty Center is competing with the professional organizations in art education; (9) "The Getty Center has a large staff and an unlimited budget; and (10) The Getty Center seeks advice from a small cadre of advisors, few practitioners among them. (MM)

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THE GETTY
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PERCEPTIONS

OF DISCIPLINE-BASED ART EDUCATION

AND THE GETTY CENTER FOR EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

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In the six years during which the Getty Center for Education in the Arts has advocated and supported discipline-based art education (DBAE), it has been aware of a number of perceptions which have evolved both around DBAE and the Center. Discipline-based art education is an approach in which ideas and skills from four foundational art disciplines of studio art, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics are integrated in a written and sequential curriculum whose content leads to cumulative knowledge, skills, and understanding in art in grades K to 12.

As DBAE has evolved as a significant alternative to other approaches to teaching and learning in art, it is natural that a variety of questions and issues have arisen. This paper addresses some prevailing perceptions about DBAE and the Center:

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Perception #1:	The Getty Center invented discipline-based art education (DBAE).
Perception #2:	DBAE is a specific curriculum.
Perception #3:	DBAE requires equal time and attention for each of the four art disciplines and seeks to replace making art with talking about it.
Perception #4:	DBAE does not encourage the development of creativity.
Perception #5:	DBAE is mechanistic and takes the fun out of art.
Perception #6:	The Getty Center does not support art specialists and DBAE does not involve artists.
Perception #7:	DBAE is limited to fine art from Western cultures.
Perception #8:	The Getty Center is competing with the professional organizations in art education.
Perception #9:	The Getty Center has a large staff and an unlimited budget.
Perception #10:	The Getty Center seeks advice from a small cadre of advisors, few practitioners among them.

PERCEPTION #1: THE GETTY CENTER INVENTED DISCIPLINE-BASED ART EDUCATION

The ideas contained in DBAE have been circulating in the field for almost a quarter-century, as indicated in the review of art education theory and practice contained in the special theme issue devoted to DBAE published by The Journal of Aesthetic Education (summer 1987). The Center's choice of the DBAE approach was based upon more than a hundred interviews with arts educators and educational policy

makers throughout the United States conducted when its programs were first being formulated.

The Center adopted DBAE because it represents a comprehensive approach to teaching art in the schools. It believes that the DBAE approach is an effective way to learn about art, and that the development of theory and practice in art education over the last quarter-century supports this view. By integrating ideas and skills from four art disciplines this approach enables students to experience art in its widest possible manifestations.

PERCEPTION #2: DBAE IS A SPECIFIC CURRICULUM

Discipline-based art education is an approach to teaching and learning about art rather than a specific curriculum. DBAE can take many forms and therefore many different DBAE-inspired curricula can be developed for the nation's schools. No single or "national curricula" would be consistent with the pluralism that characterizes American education policy and the adoption of curricula in all subjects. What the different forms of DBAE curricula will have in common are:

1. provision of art as a subject within general education, with a written and sequentially organized curriculum consisting of lessons containing content drawn from four foundational art disciplines, which build a body of cumulative knowledge and skills in art that can be appropriately evaluated;

2. a goal of developing students' abilities to make art (production), interpret and analyze art (criticism), know art's role in culture (history), and discuss questions about the nature of art and make informed judgements about it (aesthetics); and

3. implementation of art education on a district-wide basis with appropriate administrative support, staff development, and material resources.

At the present time school districts may choose to use one of the commercially available curricula, but some of these were developed years ago without the benefit of recent DBAE theory. The Center would like to see the design and development of additional curricula based on DBAE concepts by local school districts, state departments of education, university art education departments, and commercial publishers.

PERCEPTION #3: DBAE REQUIRES EQUAL TIME FOR EACH OF THE FOUR ART DISCIPLINES AND SEEKS TO REPLACE MAKING ART WITH TALKING ABOUT IT

Discipline-based art education does require art curricula to include significant content drawn from the disciplines of studio art, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. There is, however, no requirement in DBAE for equal time and attention to each discipline. The amount of time and attention to be devoted to each of the art disciplines is likely to depend upon the different forms DBAE curricula will take and the populations of the students being taught. Furthermore, the DBAE approach stresses the integration of content from the four disciplines.

For example, in an introductory art course in a secondary school built upon a strong studio-based tradition, art production might continue to occupy a dominant place. In another course, art history might be featured. In contrast to past practices, however, art production in one course and art history in the other would be complemented by significant and integrated contributions from the other art disciplines.

In the elementary school as well, art production might be expected to receive a major share of attention because of the developmental capacities of students. At higher grade levels, however, the disciplines of aesthetics, art criticism, or art history might receive more attention, but again it would depend upon local circumstances and individual contexts. What would be essential is that all four disciplines be integrated into the course of study.

Art production or studio art is one of the central features of a DBAE approach. Art production plays a prominent part in state frameworks and local district curriculum guides. It is also a key component in the National Art Education Association's Quality Goals Statement. These documents acknowledge that the studio component is but one part of a quality art education program, not its exclusive focus.

An approach that utilizes content from the four art disciplines is closer to how artists actually confront, experience, and produce art. It is not a case of making art or talking about art, but of both of these dimensions. Thus DBAE does not seek to replace art-making with talking about art, but reinforces, through a variety of learning modes, the multi-faceted character of the visual arts.

PERCEPTION #4: DBAE DOES NOT ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVITY

DBAE encourages creativity since it is the source of art. However, it embraces creativity not for its own sake, but for its contribution to making and understanding art. Creativity often has been central to an approach to teaching art which looks upon the child's art-making processes primarily as opportunities for creative self-expression. Unfortunately, some notions of creativity result in the absence of art

instruction. Such notions often trivialize art as a subject in the eyes of many non-art teachers, administrators, and parents, and perhaps even students themselves.

Through DBAE a child's creativity is enhanced by skills and concepts acquired through a substantive curriculum. For example, by acquiring studio skills students are enabled to use these as a basis for creating their own art.

PERCEPTION #5: DBAE IS MECHANISTIC AND TAKES THE FUN OUT OF ART

The perception that DBAE is mechanistic may stem from the use of a written, sequential curriculum. The use of a curriculum is intended to elicit competent instruction and cumulative learning. Curricula are not formulas or blueprints; they provide a resource to be mediated by sensitive teaching. Following a curriculum transforms art teaching into a reflective, goal-directed activity. There is nothing in DBAE per se, when handled by sensitive and responsive art teachers, that prevents the nurture and display of the special excitement -- emotional and intellectual -- that ought to be part of all art experiences.

DBAE can possess endless possibilities for the expansion of imagination and the development of divergent problem-solving skills. It can be adapted to different age levels or individual classes. Just how this might be accomplished, and in what combination and sequence, depends largely upon the knowledge, imagination, and sensitivity of those who conceive and design new art programs, as well as the conditions imposed by particular learning environments. The broad interest in and acceptance of DBAE evidences among art educators and educational policy makers suggest it has been largely perceived to be flexible and adaptable to local circumstances rather than mechanistic.

PERCEPTION #6: THE GETTY CENTER DOES NOT SUPPORT ART SPECIALISTS AND DBAE DOES NOT INVOLVE ARTISTS

Where there are art specialists teaching students in grades K-12, the Center believes that they are in the best position to teach discipline-based art education. With the competence provided by their preparation and expertise, art specialists ought to be able to teach art in a DBAE setting in a compelling and effective manner.

It is desirable to maximize the art specialist's time with students by making the general classroom teacher a collaborator. The Center's hope if to have art included as a subject in general education for all students. In those schools without art specialists this will mean preparing elementary classroom teachers to offer a DBAE program. That is why the Center's pilot staff development and curriculum implementation project in Los Angeles, known as the Getty Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts, focuses primarily upon preparing general elementary classroom teachers. This in no way diminishes the importance of the art specialist and the

professional acumen which he or she can bring to an art program. In other locales the preparation of teachers for DBAE focuses on art specialists because they are available at both elementary and secondary levels.

The creative work of artists makes art education possible. The Center encourages artists' involvement in art education as important sources for inspiration and content for teaching studio or art production. When artists work in DBAE programs, they need a clear understanding of the approach so their efforts contribute to student learning objectives. Perhaps some day art historians, art critics, and aestheticians, as well as artists, will have instructional roles in schools.

Regardless of the number of artists, critics, historians or aestheticians that might work in school art programs, it is the art teachers who are still central. It is their responsibility to successfully integrate instruction by art professionals from the community when they work in classrooms.

PERCEPTION #7: DBAE IS LIMITED TO FINE ART FROM WESTERN CULTURES

DBAE includes a broad base of art exemplars from Western and non-Western cultures, ranging from most ancient to most contemporary. The important criteria for selection of all art works for instruction is that they be of high quality. They need to clearly embody the features or qualities being experienced and discussed.

An emphasis on European and American art that exists in most art programs, from kindergarten through college, is a natural consequence of the background, experience, and values of those in the various fields of art teaching and practice. It takes effective teachers to connect their students to high achievements of any civilization, their own as well as others.

Effective DBAE curricula may also draw imagery from a variety of art sources, including folk arts, crafts, industrial or applied arts, photography and electronic media, in addition to painting, sculpture, print making and architecture. All of these may be suitable for DBAE use if selected and employed consistently with DBAE principles.

PERCEPTION #8: THE GETTY CENTER IF COMPETING WITH THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ART EDUCATION

The Getty Center is committed to partnerships and collaborations, not competition. For example, there is considerable congruence between the goals of the National Art Education Association (as stated in the Quality Goals statement of NAEA) and the Getty Center: both organizations advocate comprehensive, written curricula supported by appropriate resources at all levels of schooling.

The Getty Center fully realizes the limits of the role it can play as a non-profit private

organization in supporting art education. The Center works to complement the valuable leadership and programs of NAEA and other national, state and local professional organizations that have served art education for decades. The Center has supported the Instructional Resources section, with color reproductions of works of art, that appear in Art Education, the NAEA journal. The NAEA published the anthology Research Readings for DBAE: A Journey Beyond Creating with Getty Center support. The Center is also collaborating with such groups as the National Endowment for the Arts, National PTA, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National School Boards Association.

PERCEPTION #9: THE GETTY CENTER HAS A LARGE STAFF AND AN UNLIMITED BUDGET

The Getty Center for Education in the Arts is one of seven operating entities of the J. Paul Getty Trust, located in Los Angeles. The Center staff is comprised of four professionals: a program director, three program officers, and support personnel. This staff initiates and manages the Center's programs and frequently contracts with art educators and other experts to implement its programs.

As a private operating foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust does not publish individual budgets of its entities. The Center is expected to function within budgetary limits which preclude its supporting every worthwhile proposal made to it.

PERCEPTION #10: THE GETTY CENTER SEEKS ADVICE FROM A SMALL CADRE OF ADVISORS, FEW PRACTITIONERS AMONG THEM

The Getty Center for Education in the Arts has consulted widely in the field to determine not only its original mission but the continuing nature and scope of its programs. The Center maintains an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from art education, the four art disciplines, museum education, and general education. In addition, the Center utilizes professional peer review panels for grant programs and solicits and analyzes regularly the responses of art teachers, administrators, and museum educators involved in its programs.

There is no individual, institution, or geographic region that dominates this flow of ideas. The roots of DBAE, its advocates and its leadership are national in scope. Advice and ideas also are obtained through sponsorship of regional and national seminars and conferences in which a broad spectrum of representatives in the field are assembled to continue the dialogue about discipline-based art education. The proceedings of these meetings are typically published and disseminated to an even wider audience.

Summary

This brief review of major perceptions that have arisen about discipline-based art education and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts has been formulated to help inform the field about the Center's definition of DBAE and its activities. We believe it is beneficial for professionals in the field of art education or with related interests to openly discuss discipline-based art education or any other approach or set of ideas. The Center remains open to dialogue which will help resolve ambiguities, dispel misperceptions, and advance the status and quality of art education in America's schools.

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The Getty Center for Education in the Arts acknowledges the valuable contributions of the many art educators who reviewed drafts of this paper prepared by the Center's Senior Program Officer, Stephen Mark Dobbs.